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RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: POST-YUSUF REFLECTIONS AND UPDATES

REF: ABUJA 1405

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Anthony R. Eterno for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Local and international media carry photographs of Islamist extremist leader Muhammad Yusuf allegedly in custody just prior to his death. The situation on the ground remains calm, with all 4,000 displaced persons reportedly now back in their homes. Given the difficulty of distinguishing between civilians and Boko Haram militants, and the use of mass graves to bury the dead in a timely manner, it will be hard to establish a precise count or identification of the dead between civilian and Boko Haram from the four days of violence. Contacts across the country doubt Yusuf's fate will resonate with northern or southern Muslims, though many cite the violence as evidence of widespread discontent with the politico-economic status quo. End Summary.

The Aftermath  
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12. (SBU) On August 3, local and international media carried photos of Boko Haram leader Muhammad Yusuf allegedly in military custody just before he was handed over to the police and his bullet-ridden body was subsequently shown to local journalists. The Nigerian Red Cross estimates that there were more than 700 total fatalities during the four days of violence. According to a senior official of the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency, all 4,000 persons displaced by the fighting have returned home.

ONE VIEW FROM THE NORTH  
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13. (C) On August 2, Borno State native and former Minister of National Planning Dr. Daggash told the Ambassador that police killed innocent civilians during the sweeps that led up to Yusuf's capture. The police, Daggash claimed, were rounding up anyone entering or departing a mosque, taking them to undisclosed locations, and summarily executing them. He added that two of his long-time employees (one who had worked for his family for 30 years) were picked up after their daily prayers at a mosque and were then executed. Daggash stated that Muslims and Christians in Borno believe that the governor and other state officials were complicit in the police actions.

14. (C) Human rights activists and leading intellectuals from southern Nigeria reject the notion that Boko Haram would evoke sympathy or support in their region. They told CG Lagos that southern Muslims are, as Eneruvie Enakoko of the Civil Liberties Organization put it, "too enlightened" to support the group's anti-education objectives. Others said that Muslims in the south are too fragmented to be organized along sectarian lines like Boko Haram. Is-haq Akintola of the Muslims Rights Congress (MURIC) observed that the objectives of Boko Haram are contrary to the teachings of the Koran, which are universal and all-embracing.

15. (C) The southerners argued that the violence in the four northern states reflected intense popular frustration with the political, economic, and social status quo. The violence directed at government institutions, they said, is proof of deep-seated mistrust of the northern political leadership. Professor Lai Olurode, the Secretary General of the Islamic Network for Development, called it a "backlash against the northern political leaders." Olasupo Ijo, President of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, maintained that Nigeria is on the brink of a constitutional and political crisis.

16. (C) The apparent extrajudicial killings, southern human rights activists said, demonstrate the GON's contempt for human life and the rule of law. They condemned the killings regardless of the crimes committed by Boko Haram. Professor

ABUJA 00001419 002 OF 002

Pat Utomi of the Lagos Business School claimed the killings were only a high-profile example of what is a frequent occurrence in Nigeria.

17. (C) Others suggested that the GON onslaught against Boko Haram was a warning to militants in the Niger Delta of their fate if they spurned amnesty, while some voiced concern that the police had "silenced" Boko Haram's leadership to prevent revelations about their alleged well-connected backers. Enakoko and Allen Onyema of the Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria (FEHN) charged that Boko Haram elements had helped the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) come to power in key northern states.

Comment

18. (C) Comment: Our best judgment is that between 400 and 700 people died during the four days of violence, many of them civilians and many under questionable circumstances. A more precise count or identification of the dead may be impossible to determine in light of the use of mass graves for timely burials and the civilian appearance of many Boko Haram militants. Political observers in the south are predictably quick to spin the recent events against the ruling PDP and the north, but a key consequence of Muhammad Yusuf's now widely-accepted extrajudicial death is its bolstering of conspiracy theories that Boko Haram operated with the support of key northern politicians and their allies in the security services. End Comment.

19. (U) Embassy Abuja and CG Lagos jointly produced this cable.

SANDERS